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else who calls himself an agnostic) possesses a healthy aversion to everything that is degraded, and a strenuous desire to recognize the nobler aspects of human life. That those aspects are adequately expressed I should, of course, dispute ; but that the intention is to express them no one can, in fairness, deny. But does this fact bear the slightest weight as an argument against the religion of Theism? Does it follow that Mr. Stephen's true emotions and instincts are inimical to, or incompatible with, or not entirely contained and absorbed in, the truths of Christianity? Because Mr. Stephen has honest human sympathies, does it follow that he has exhibited that understanding of the principles of theology and philosophy which is requisite to justify an attack on them? Not logically, perhaps ; though it might appear to follow to the "general reader" whose reason is lazy but whose sympathies are active. To such emotions, however, Mr. Stephen has provided a corrective. In strange inconsistency with his protests against those people whose only argument is a sneer, he never loses an opportunity of scoffing at subjects and ideas which most people regard with reverence. Apart from the counter-emotion which may thus, perhaps, be excited, the reader is placed in a very practical dilemma. In the last chapter, entitled "The Religion of all Sensible Men," mankind is divided exhaustively into two classes,—the first, "sensible," who believe that there is no religion, and are only in doubt as to whether they should impart their beliefs to others ; the second, fools, who want a religion, and whom it is the duty of the "sensible" either to dupe or to dismay. "Why drop a veil so easily worn? Religion is, after all, useful ; and we are even bound—for the sensible man can take a high moral tone when he pleases—to invent the God who does not exist" (p. 339). Surely no reader can identify himself either with the presumption of such "sense" or the degradation of such folly.

ARTHUR EASTWOOD.

LE DEVOIR PRÉSENT. Par Paul Desjardins. Paris : Armand Colin et Cie., 1892.

This beautiful little book should have had an earlier notice in these pages. It breathes a spirit almost identical with that which animates the "ethical" movement in America, and contains a distinct and noble recognition of the value of the discourses translated by Professor Hoffman, of Ghent, into French, under the title, "La Religion basée sur la morale : Choix de discours publiés par les sociétés pour la culture morale" (Paris : Fischbacher, 1891).

According to M. Desjardins, there are more fundamental questions than those relating to the divinity of Christ, or even to the existence of a personal God. Has mankind a destiny? Is there a law for human life? Is duty a reality? These are the deeper problems, and he argues for an affirmative, positive answer to them in a way that can hardly fail to persuade, and that refreshes the spirit as well. It is reassuring to hear, above all from France (which we commonly suppose to be given over either to superstition or to practical materialism, with elegant scholars like Renan, and a few philosophers or men of science, in between), such a cry, such a call. For one must not suppose that "*Le Devoir Présent*" is a philosophical treatise (it would have limitations considered from that side); it is the call of an earnest spirit for a new moral life in the French nation, for new practical convictions, for a transformation of individuals and society.

The aim of M. Desjardins is not to destroy the old religions, nor is it to found a new religion. The primordial affair, he says, is not speculation on the universe, but conduct. Nor is his aim to be identified with that of philanthropic societies. It includes charity; but it goes deeper than charity,—he wishes to touch and awaken the *souls* of men. He believes that working-people, as truly as others, might be inspired with a great aim,—might help themselves and help one another in various ways, and make the sacrifices and take the responsibilities, which are the only means of ennobling men. M. Desjardins believes in democracy, but is opposed to socialism. Very severe is he on the immoral literature with which France is flooded, and he hopes that art will be penetrated with a more serious spirit, a higher morality. At the outset a movement of opinion is alone desired; but in time M. Desjardins hopes that the idea will incarnate itself somewhat as it has in America and England (and, it might be added, in the light of recent events, in Germany). No meagre notice like this—no notice of any sort—can give an idea of the charm and earnestness and persuasive power of M. Desjardins's little volume. It should be translated into English.

WM. M. SALTER.

ETHICAL SONGS, WITH MUSIC. New York : Henry Holt & Co., 1892.  
[London : T. Fisher Unwin.]

This volume of one hundred and forty-seven songs is issued anonymously, but one of the compilers is understood to be Dr. Stanton Coit. It is the practical result, the compilers say, of a